

PANHANDLE HEALTH DISTRICT

PRESENTS

Pandemic Flu Particulars

Tips to help communities prepare for, survive and recover from pandemic flu and other disasters

A flu pandemic, like many disasters, has the potential to disrupt everything we count on, from mail delivery to heat in our homes to trash pickup to law enforcement. Thirty percent of workers will stay home sick or to care for the sick. Worker absence will close some businesses and cripple services.

Planning ahead is a must for businesses and governments. The Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security advises that every community emergency management plan include a Continuity of Operations section to:

- ◆ Ensure continuous performance of essential functions.
- ◆ Protect essential facilities, equipment, records and other assets.
- ◆ Reduce or mitigate disruptions to operations.
- ◆ Reduce loss of life and minimize damage and losses.
- ◆ Achieve a timely and orderly recovery for an emergency and resumption of full service.

The grocery industry offers a great example of Continuity of Operations planning (attached). In 38 pages, it outlines the issues the food industry will face in a flu pandemic—e.g. sick workers, supply shortages, a shift to Internet shopping, demand for self-checkout, fewer truck drivers, fuel shortages—and brainstorms solutions—employee cross-training, identifying alternate suppliers, developing store consolidation plans, identifying essential services and reorganizing to provide them. It addresses the need for short-term disability and creative time-off policies, the potential of higher employee costs and disruptions to credit and debit networks and the wisdom of working with competitors for the public good among much more.

Government continuity plans may include limiting or adjusting business hours, flexible personal time off and sick leave policies and job sharing. Government and business face similar problems in a disaster; solutions, though, are individual and reached most sensibly *before* a disaster.

To terminate this service, respond and type REMOVE in the subject line.